



THE SATURDAY REVIEW

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SIXPENCE

CORONATION RITES continue according to tradition and without any untoward incident except the comparative indifference of the Clerk of the Weather. On Wednesday their Majesties were received at Temple Bar, the gate of the City, by the Lord Mayor of London and his staff, who had been awaiting them at the adjacent "Banking House of Mr. Child," Lord Mayor in the sixteenth century. The procession to Guildhall followed the usual route, and after luncheon the return journey was made through wider streets which enabled a vast concourse of lieges to acclaim their loyalty. And Wednesday, Thursday and Friday find the King at Portsmouth reviewing his Fleet—a great naval occasion, which will enable all his subjects, and perhaps we may add all the world, to recognise the significance of the silent service.

THE PROPOSAL for a march through London of the Dominion, Indian and Colonial Coronation contingents before their departure to their own countries is one that Londoners and the vast numbers of visitors still in the metropolis would warmly welcome. True, these contingents have done a good deal of marching already, but they would probably appreciate the compliment of being asked to take part in a special march in order to enable the London crowds once more to display their warm admiration of their fine military qualities. It is obvious that this Coronation has stirred the imagination of the peoples of the Empire in a way that few of us could have contemplated, and a march of Imperial troops in the very heart and centre of the Empire, at a time when one of the most notable of Imperial Conferences was being held in London, would be yet another means of fittingly demonstrating the strength of Imperial sentiment at present uniting the various peoples and countries forming the British Commonwealth of Nations.

MR. BALDWIN'S farewell to public life was fittingly addressed, in the Albert Hall on Tuesday, to a great gathering of the next generation. Young people from all over the Empire assembled to hear his message, and it was a message worthy of the speaker and one which all his hearers should remember throughout their lives. The future, he said, is with them: "I have had my hour." Mr. Baldwin came late in life to a prominent position among English statesmen, and he showed, rather unexpectedly, the truth of the old Greek saying that the acceptance of authority proves or disproves the worth of a man. He told those who will succeed him and us to put duty first and rights afterwards. They were trustees as well as the recipients of a goodly heritage. Especially in these days were they the inheritors of that freedom which our ancestors established in the past—faith in the effectiveness of

the individual. He touched lightly on contrary beliefs, in the supremacy of the State—false gods to which other nations have learnt to bow the knee. Kingship was the symbol of our faith, now and for the years to come. To the next generation the torch was handed on with confidence and hope. A great and memorable farewell.

BUSES are still absent from the streets of London, and as we write there seems little prospect of their immediate return, or that the strike, at all events officially, is likely to spread to other methods of transport. The strikers are clearly divided on the question of return to work on the promise of a full and impartial consideration of their grievances. Probably the majority, if they had a free hand, would accept the proposals made, but as so often happens in these affairs the minority are in control. Busmen have their admitted grievances, and under an impartial committee they are likely to be redressed. In the meantime London carries on with much less discomfort than might have been expected. Mr. Bevin has no doubt observed this fact.

LORD SNOWDEN, though not a great statesman, was a great little man who rose by his own efforts and abilities to almost the highest position in the State. He served his country wholeheartedly according to his lights, and what can man do more? He was handicapped both physically and intellectually. In early life he suffered an accident which left him almost a cripple and, we are told, in almost constant pain. The spirit of man has struggled successfully against even worse misfortunes: witness Heine on his mattress-grave. Intellectually, Snowden was handicapped by the narrow education which in his youth was all that was open to men of his birth and environment. Thus he reached political maturity at an age nearly double that of those who inherit and develop early a tradition of culture and public service. Hence that bitterness toward his opponents almost Swiftian in its intensity. In spite of all this he gained a general respect not accorded to the time-server. As Chancellor of the Exchequer he opened a Budget which disclosed clearly that he was alive to the fallacies of Socialism, and set us on the road to national prosperity which we are following to-day.

THE DUKE OF WINDSOR and his lady have now fixed the date of their marriage for June 3. Last week we expressed the view that he would like the least possible publicity for the event, and the arrangements made for the marriage give countenance to that suggestion. No other members of the Royal Family will be present on the occasion, which will be attended only by his immediate friends. It is perhaps too much to

expect that his obvious wish for privacy will be respected in all quarters next month. The responsible Press of England may be relied upon to respect it, but uneasy lies the Head that has no Crown. As we wrote last week, he did his best, and let no man cast a stone.

MR. ROOSEVELT'S PLAN to reform the Supreme Court of the United States and make it more amenable to constitutional experiments like his New Deal appears to have received at least one considerable rebuff, for the Senate Judiciary Committee has rejected his proposals by 16 votes to eight. As for the resignation of one of the nine old men who (no longer) live in a cellar, though this individual is a pronounced Conservative and anti-Dealer, curiously enough both Mr. Roosevelt's friends and his opponents regard this new development as a striking victory for the cause of right-thinking. That rather surprising fact suggests the need of caution when one is trying to estimate the political consequences of anything that happens on the other side of the Atlantic. Possibly much will depend on the kind of choice Mr. Roosevelt makes to fill the vacancy created by Justice Willis Van Deventer's retirement. But meanwhile there is talk of still further resignations among the five remaining septuagenarian Judges of the Supreme Court, and, should this flood of resignations set in in earnest, the Court will surely have done its best to reform its intractable spirit—out of existence.

MUSSOLINI is finding Abyssinia a harder nut to crack than he apparently expected, and some disillusionment is discernible in Italy. Addis Ababa, situated at a height of over 6,000 feet, is proving unsuitable as a permanent all-the-year-round residence for Europeans, and there are reports of an intended transference of the capital to a more suitable climate and a more accessible spot. The gold is there, as Solomon and the Queen of Sheba knew, but the difficulty is to get it and other minerals out. After all, the reason why Abyssinia remained throughout the centuries almost as much a hermit kingdom as Tibet and as little exploited, was the recognised difficulty of developing it. Otherwise it would not have remained so long undisturbed by the tentacles of "civilisation." Italy has a long row to hoe. Meanwhile Mussolini has taken one more step to keep his countrymen ignorant of the trend of world opinion by withdrawing Italian correspondents from this country. A very unwise step.

THE TWO OUTSTANDING pictures of the week are the two films of the Coronation. They are both in colour and have been made by two different processes. The first, which is to be seen at the Gaumont-British cinemas, is in our old friend Technicolor. In this the State coach is particularly well photographed, but the various hues of the uniforms in the procession are not so excellently rendered. The second, which is made by the Dufay process, can be seen at the Academy, the railway stations and the independent news theatres. This gives a better idea of the decorations and delineates the tints more sharply, though not

always truly. Of the other new films, *Shall We Dance*, which is at the Regal, has for its stars Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. The music is by George Gershwin, and the production is on a lavish scale. The main attraction about it is, of course, Fred Astaire's dancing; neither his skill nor his invention show the least signs of flagging. One has, however, to wait some time for Ginger Rogers to take the floor, and this may disappoint the many admirers of this couple.

ROAST BEEF, sighs a correspondent of *The Times*, is no longer to be had in England. This is sad and strange hearing for those of our present visitors—and they are many—who have come first for the Coronation and secondly to sample our national dish. On closer examination, however, one is inclined to think that the anonymous writer is unduly pessimistic. By roast beef he apparently means beef roasted on a spit, in contrast with what he calls "baked beef" from the oven. In modern flats there is certainly little room for a spit such as he and his father born in 1828 were accustomed to employ. Is anything the same as it was in 1828?

ROSBIF is poor stuff on the Continent, though we recall greedily some beefsteaks at a certain Swiss hotel with an English connection. On enquiry they proved to have been sent direct from England. But in Rome we should do as the Romans do, and enjoy the native fare, rather than expect bacon and eggs on a French breakfast table. Apart from this is it true that roast beef is unobtainable in England? In the cathedral-like kitchens of Christchurch, Oxford—not, it is true, a restaurant open to all and sundry—the spit still turns incessantly. O happy House! And there is an establishment in the Strand, not unknown to fame and to America, where the beef—whether roast or baked we know not—has great repute. And within a stone's throw of Ludgate-circus, at least twice a year a baron of beef may be seen. It is a man's place, one of the few in London where they sell no beer or spirits but only honest wine, and when a baron is displayed it bears the inscription, "Probably your wife has never seen a baron of beef: may we show her this one?" And off Lombard-street, among the bankers, there is an ancient hostelry where Dickens and many generations before him revelled and possibly "drank deep." Here the beef should cause the disgruntled correspondent we have quoted to think again.

IN THE CITY business has naturally been very quiet this week, and is likely to remain so until after the next settlement, when some revival may be expected. The position is satisfactory; trade continues to improve, and more and more unemployed are being absorbed into industry. The speculators are cutting their losses or taking their profits as the case may be, and ceasing to speculate for the moment. This is all to the advantage of the serious investor who, while keeping an eye on his position, wishes nothing better than to leave his commitments alone and take his interest regularly. There seems no reason why he should not do so.

Leading Articles

THE AGONY OF SPAIN

SCIENCE counts among its major triumphs the facility of transport which has brought nations so much closer together from the point of view of space-time. Air travellers make small bones of journeys from continent to continent and all the worshippers of modern progress stand gaping at them and fill the world with cries that war and national misunderstanding are at an end because an aeroplane can fly from China to Peru in the twinkling of an eye and speed of movement necessarily implies general sympathy and compassion. Alas! it is conceivable that folk may fly round and round the globe at a vertiginous speed in a closed box without the various divisions of white, black and yellow people understanding one another a scrap the better. If I dislike my neighbour at home, I shall dislike him a thousand miles away and I shall not have a morsel of charity left for the thousands of mortals over whose heads I have passed in the closed box of my aeroplane.

A curse of this age is the abysmal ignorance in which a nation lives as to the ideals, hopes and all the little things that really count in the life of all other nations on the face of the earth. There was a time when a journey on the Continent was an adventure. It demanded leisure and expense. When the traveller had crossed the channel, he had to become one with the people through whose country he was passing. He learnt perforce very quickly their point of view. Gradually increased facility for travel has destroyed the advantages that travel can provide. The steam engine deprived its passenger of many contacts which the coach could offer to its humblest fare; but still the foreigner who travelled by train could find at his destination a native inn to welcome him and to give him some insight into the ways and manners of the people with whom he was sojourning. The internal combustion engine damned such a differentiation. It belongs to the category of being which looks forward eagerly to the reduction of all existence to that monotonous uniformity of meaningless waves in which the universe will end according to our most optimistic scientists. The international hotel in which the guest can eat imitation haggis and drink bad madeira in Tokio and revel in Eskimo dishes on the equator was already in existence; the motor car and the aeroplane have multiplied it; to-day an earnest student of human life can go round the world, if he is cursed with too much money, without ever discovering that he is not as an Englishman and a presumed Christian in the smallest degree superior to countless humble persons through whose life he and his swift vehicle pass as an interesting but unimportant meteor.

The upshot of it all is that foreign policy splashes about more and more blindly in a morass of abysmal ignorance. Imagination in the sense that an Englishman should for a second look at

the world through a foreigner's glasses has vanished from the earth. It is the same with all nations. This atrophy of imagination has been particularly disastrous in the case of Spain. None of the Powers who have been trying to make capital out of the Spanish civil war have been able to consider the problem from the point of view of the Spanish who after all are not entirely unconcerned in the matter.

It is impossible for those who are convinced that they are right and everyone else is wrong, whether their rightness is based on the dictatorship of a man or of the proletariat, or on liberalism and democracy, to understand the Spanish point of view at all. This impossibility is well illustrated by the amiable suggestion of *The Times* that it is up to the Portuguese who "speak a language closely akin to Spanish" or to the South American Republics to mediate in the Spanish civil war. This proposal ignores a fact that is in truth inevitable. The people who really dislike one another are those who speak the same or a similar language and that dislike is multiplied when they are neighbours in space. In case of civil war in this island the last mediators that would ever be accepted would be the Irish or the United States. The French again would be barred, because we know too much about them, but there might be a chance with the Scandinavians. It is a cruel truth that the more a nationality knows of a foreign people, the more awake it is to its vices and the blinder to its virtues. The Cornishman can be friends with a Scot or a Yorkshireman, but he cherishes deep enmities against his neighbour across the county border.

If there is one nation that the Spaniards detest it is the Portuguese. They still delight in the uncharitable proverb: "Strip a Spaniard of his virtues and you find a Portuguese." The Portuguese on their side have a similar proverb to the opposite effect. Again the Spaniards have a peculiar dislike for "los Americanos" who they think have debased their language and traditions. It is surely madness to try and shift the burden of mediation on to the shoulders of those whose mediation could only produce a temporary unity in favour of its rejection.

It is a good tonic for our civilisation to be faced with a problem that is an open insult to all its fundamental vices. Spain is split by a conflict of ideals which reduces the urge for self-preservation to nothing. Those who are fighting on either side—both must have the credit—are convinced that there is something more important than death. They are ready to die for a cause and until the individuals on one side or another have decided that they prefer life to death even in conditions that so far they regard as intolerable, there can be no peace; for there is little chance that one side can wipe the other off the face of the earth.

Nearly all the news from Spain is false, but one thing is clear. Any sane person would rather be in General Franco's territory than in that of the Government. Peace and order are blessings. It is singularly unfortunate that the Nationalists are bound to represent a tradition which separates

them from the Basques who naturally should be their true allies. The spirit of ancient Spain was one of unity. In the 16th century she cried for "One sword, one church, one empire," and broke herself to fragments in pursuit of the will o' the wisp of universal unity. Columbus, when he discovered the lands beyond the ocean thought that the discovery had been vouchsafed to him to provide funds for a crusade that would impose a Spanish Empire on the world.

On the other hand no country has ever had a more pronounced provincial and individualist feeling. Even in an universal Spanish empire, there would have been considerable individual liberty apart from questions of religion. In these days the provinces which in the case of the Basques and Catalans represent unabsorbed nationalities, are struggling for their own special ideals and the people themselves are striking for individual freedom under the name of anarchy. Hence an insoluble problem, which can only be solved by the loss of everything for which the supporters of the Government are fighting. There is every chance that the Spanish civil war will end in a struggle between two dictators distinguished only by their titles and professions of faith.

STRIKES AND THE PUBLIC

BY what must now seem to many people a merciful dispensation of providence, no buses ran in the streets of London throughout Coronation week. If to the ordinary confusion created by legions of motor cars there had been added the once familiar and now almost forgotten fleets of buses, it is almost impossible to suppose that anyone would ever have got near the procession, or that London would have been anything but impassable in the days that followed.

So far so good. But this has not mitigated the high inconvenience and the sense of grievance suffered by the less affluent members of the travelling public. The busmen, with their sad and obviously rather stupid committee, have piled blunder on blunder. They imagined that by timing their strike for Coronation week they would hold up the London Transport Board, the Government, and the public as effectively as any more experienced highwayman. They were wrong. By continuing the strike they have accustomed the public to managing without them, they have affronted the public sense of decency and reason, and they have succeeded in the quite difficult task of making themselves unimportant. They are no longer "news." They really should not have expected that their gastric ailments and their 7½-hour day and the withdrawal of their labour would continue to occupy columns in the newspapers when the public mind was centred entirely on the Coronation.

On the other hand, nothing is so fatal to a cause as the loss of public interest. Once you become a bore, you find it very difficult to get a hearing. And if you become an annoying bore, people are disinclined to pay any heed to what you say, however much of the truth you may be speaking. The

busmen have blundered badly. If they come back to work next week they will, at the best, be subjected to a horrid lot of chaff from the travelling public. They will certainly be sick of the subject of their stomachs before they have been on the streets for many days. And if they do not come back to work, nobody is going to mind very much.

Yet this bus strike has its very serious aspects. It is a symptom. With its bed-fellows, the threatened coal strike, and its lesser fore-runners, it seems to foreshadow one of those periods of unrest which illustrate the futilities of civilisation and the weaknesses of democracy. When manual or other workers are sweated, exploited, or ill-used, there is in these days an immediate rush of public sympathy and public understanding which secures justice, whether that justice be imposed by the Government or granted by companies and corporations. But these strikes do not come within this category. There was in the beginning a great deal of public sympathy with a large part of the case presented by the busmen. But it was recognised that the offer of the London Transport Board, which Mr. Bevin in vain urged the bus committee to accept, went a very long way towards meeting the real difficulties.

As for the coal strike which is threatened, this seems to the ordinary public not only bewildering but paradoxical. The trouble lies in the Nottingham coalfields. But no question is involved of wages or conditions of employment. It is merely a question of whether one trade union shall swallow another and of whether official trade unionism shall become entirely autocratic. There may be a certain amount of obstinacy and pig-headedness on both sides. But the chief point at issue cannot strike the public as reasonable and it is certainly Gilbertian that all the coalfields of the country, where peace reigns at present and where, as in Durham, new agreements have recently been sealed and signed, should be brought to a standstill because trade union rivalry in one particular district cannot be composed.

The public detect in all this the work of subversive agitation. They resent it as such. They cannot understand how men can be made so mad that they are willing to destroy themselves and the industries by which they live for reasons which are neither good nor compelling, and they are disgusted when this wave of unrest begins to sweep the labour world at a time of national rejoicing and patriotic pride. They feel that the country and the Empire are humiliated by these exhibitions. They are therefore in no mood to give their sympathy to strikes and strikers.

This being so, the new fashion of strikes is not at all likely to succeed. But it can do a great deal of damage to the trade and prosperity of the country, which had just begun to revive themselves. And the most serious, the most alarming feature of the whole business is the obvious impotence of trade unionism and its accredited leaders. They cannot control their followers. But unless this authority can be re-asserted the trade union movement must seek its true parallel in Spain—which is not an encouraging prospect.

FOX AND VIXEN

THE night was frosty and the grass was covered with tiny crystals which made it shine like polished pewter. In the black velvet of the sky a full moon sailed amid a myriad stars. The trees cast dense black shadows over the gleaming grass and the hedges loomed stark and menacing in the pale moonlight.

Suddenly one sound drowned all others; an eerie, spine-chilling wail as though some creature were in torment. Again it came and again, shattering the silence with its note of agony. There was a short pause before it was answered by a shrill, thrice-repeated bark. Then once again quiet fell upon the wood. But not for long. The banshee wailing was resumed as though the utterer was in the last extremities of torture. The yapping was getting nearer now and as it came closer the screeches became even more blood-curdling. The shrill barking grew more and more excited and moved ever quicker towards the sound of the screaming. It continued for a moment. Then again all was silent.

It was no earth-bound spirit abroad in that wood, but a little vixen announcing the fact that she was looking for a mate. That horrid, hair-raising screeching was her love-song calling the dog-foxes of the neighbourhood to come to her. The yapping was a dog-fox who had heard her summons and was hastening to her side.

She stood beside a holly bush and waited for her suitor. She was only a little thing with a skimpy brush. With her head cocked on one side she

listened; she could hear nothing. The barking had ceased and no rustle of dead leaves betrayed the coming of the dog-fox. But all at once, silent as a cloud, he stepped from the bushes in front of her and came forward into the open space beside the holly bush.

He, too, was small, but beautifully proportioned. His brush was fluffy and ended in a long white tag. He was lean and hard and wiry. His slanting, yellow eyes gleamed as he saw her standing there and he took a pace forward. But now that he had come to her she seemed diffident. She snarled at him in disdain and moved away as he advanced. The dog seemed puzzled. He began to show himself off, holding his brush high and pacing round her as if to show what a fine fellow he was. The vixen pretended not to notice him, but she watched him continually out of the corner of her eye.

For some time this strange courtship continued and it seemed that the little fox had won his lady. Fate was against him. He noticed that the little vixen was staring at a dense patch of undergrowth. He turned to look at it and as he did so another dog-fox stepped out into the open. The newcomer was a much larger specimen and finer in every way. He stared contemptuously at his smaller rival and his lips writhed back in a snarl to show the long canine teeth. The little fox was not daunted and snarled back. Stiff-legged he paced forward and faced his rival. They stood for some few moments face to face as if trying to sum each other up. They walked round and round like two dogs itching for a fight. The vixen watched them; it was not for her to interfere. It was for the two males to fight it out and she would take the better.

Without warning the fight began. The big fox stepped to one side and with a sideways snatch he snapped at the other. The small one dodged and snapped back. He missed his grip and then his opponent was into him. Round and round the clearing they fought, tearing and biting at each other. They fought in silence save for the sobbing of their breath. There was no holding on; it was snap and dodge and snap again. It was none the less deadly.

Although the little fellow was brave enough his adversary had the advantage of weight and strength and it soon became evident that he would have no difficulty in winning the prize. The small fox was bleeding from many gashes and he was nearly done, while his big enemy was almost unmarked. It ended very quickly. The little chap realised that he stood no chance. For a moment or two more he stood his ground and then he fled. The victor moved over to his new won bride and caressed her and she returned his lovemaking. Together they moved off into the thick growth of brambles.

The loser lay down in a thorn patch and licked his wounds. He was sore and very tired and he curled himself to sleep. So tired was he that he did not hear the huntsman's voice next morning until the hounds were all round him. He jumped up but he was too stiff to move quickly and they pulled him down. In one night he had lost his bride and his life.

DAN RUSSELL.

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The Intentions of General Hertzog ...

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India To-day ...

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Canada and The Monroe Doctrine By M. A. KELLY

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Books of The Day

THE MACHINE AGE

MR. A. J. PENTY is one of those writers with a style that charms one into continuing reading a book that has perhaps been idly opened. One may not agree with all his opinions, but at least his argument flows so easily and persuasively that one cannot resist following it to its conclusions. His philosophy, too, on the whole has the merit of being severely practical and of being founded on a wide acquaintance with history. He has little use for modern Socialism and none for Communism: that the Russian experiment has proved a ghastly failure he has no doubt at all. To it he devotes an illuminating chapter in his latest book, "Tradition and Modernism in Politics" (Sheed & Ward, 5s.). "From the very outset," he says, "the Bolshevik revolution partook of the nature of a collision between theorists fired with a new ideal and political, social, economic and psychological conditions of which they had no comprehension; and in this collision the idealism was worsted. Russia under the Soviets is an unheard-of tyranny." Yet, despite the Russian failure, there is, he thinks, "a widespread drift towards Communism, especially in partly industrialized countries." The explanation, he says, lies in the fact that the "world economic situation gets steadily worse; and as no sure leadership is to be found within existing political parties, Communism presents itself as the only hope. . . . Industrialism has dehumanized and despiritualized the workers and the drift towards Communism is . . . a psychological reaction against the degrading conditions of employment to which they have to submit."

The machine, he argues, has become the master of man, and he traces this mastery back to the suppression of the Luddite Riots—"a turning point in history, for it committed society to the unrestricted use of machinery." The machine has become a veritable Frankenstein monster. "We talk about power-politics, but we ought to talk about machine-politics, for all modern politics are the politics of the machine; they are all dictated by the unrestricted use of machinery which creates problem after problem which admits of no obvious solution. What are international politics, the foreign policies of all nations concerned with, but to secure markets in which to dump the surplus products of industrialism and to secure sources of raw material to satisfy the voracious appetite of the machines we refuse to regulate?" The motor-car being a machine does not escape its share of Mr. Penty's indictment. "Our countryside is being permanently ruined by a generation that has neither the wit to create nor the intelligence to value and preserve what it has inherited. . . . Wherever we go nowadays we find ourselves confronted by a new blend of ugliness, compounded of anæmic-looking bungalows, petrol pumps and concrete roads; all the consequence of the automobile."

PLATO UP TO DATE

The old-fashioned classical scholar would have had something resembling an apoplectic fit if he had been asked to make a popular "turn" out of Plato and his "Republic." Other times, other manners. And to-day, when reverence so often counts for so little, we need perhaps feel no surprise that a Fellow and Tutor of New College, Oxford, Mr. R. S. Crossman to wit, should first "produce" Plato for broadcasting talks and then "feature" him in lecturing guise, airing opinions on British democracy, British Education, Russian Communism and Fascism ("Plato To-day," Allen & Unwin, 7s. 6d.).

No doubt this is an effective way to expound Plato to a modern public that knows nothing about him except perhaps that he was an ancient philosopher with a Utopian dream, and it must be said for Mr. Crossman that in his preliminary and later chapters he does supply his reader with an excellent critical commentary on Plato's life, work, dreams and failures. But in these "imaginary conversations" he appears at times deliberately to travesty Plato for his own purposes as "a democrat and a Socialist who sees Fascism rejected and democracy defended on quite inadequate grounds" and who wants his reader to realise that "the real menace of Fascism is due to the scarcity of democrats with a practical and realistic creed." In justice to Mr. Crossman, one must add that he is fully aware that his method of exposition may "shock many readers of Plato" and that "they will be unwilling to accept the picture which I have presented and will urge that it is a caricature, not a portrait, of the Plato whom they admire." This frankness disarms criticism and compels one to concentrate on acknowledging the excellencies of the less imaginary part of Mr. Crossman's book.

THE POMPADOUR

Miss Margaret Trouncer has now completed the second book of her French historical trilogy. Her first book was about a woman in Louis XIV's reign "who sinned and repented" (Louise de La Vallière); the present one about a woman in Louis XV's reign "who sinned and did not repent" ("The Pompadour," with 16 illustrations, Faber & Faber, 15s.); and the third, she tells us, is to concern yet another woman, this time in Louis XVI's reign, "who led a blameless life," and for this reason, she anticipates, her final volume "will probably not run into more than one edition." Knowing how well Miss Trouncer can write, one need not take this cynical commentary too seriously. Sin and the sinner no doubt have their peculiar fascination for frail humanity, but one is quite prepared to believe nonetheless that Miss Trouncer can make out an equally attractive and readable case for virtue when she sets about penning it. She has a flair for reconstituting the historical scene in all its colourful detail and for reproducing the living actors on it. Her Pompadour, one feels, is the veritable Toinette Poisson who passed from her convent school to become the mistress—the fourth—of Louis XV, who "never loved her" and did not dismiss the "macreuse" because "it would have killed her to

have sent her away." We see the Pompadour in her picturesque and luxurious setting, in a corrupt and dissolute Court: her life "a perpetual combat" of intrigue and guile to retain place and power, her consolation for disappointment in love and decline in looks, her hobbies which included "the more enduring pleasures of art and literary patronage." Miss Trouncer, rather strangely perhaps, omits all reference to the part played by the Pompadour in the expulsion of the Jesuits and in the quarrels between the Crown and the Parliament, excusing the omission on the ground of lack of space. She does, however, find space for some account of the Marquise's meddling in the matter of the Austrian alliance and in the conduct of the Seven Years War. The illustrations taken from old paintings and engravings add to the charm of the book.

FROM STAGE TO REAL DRAMA

Countess Nostitz (Lilie de Fernandez-Azabal) has seen life from many angles. Born in America (Hamburg, Iowa), she was making a great name for herself on the stage when she met and fell in love with a German Baron. She then went to Germany and moved in Court circles till she once more fell in love—this time with a Russian nobleman, Count Nostitz, one of the richest men in Tsarist Russia. Her German husband agreed to a divorce, and so she came to marry the Count and go to Russia, where once more she was in Court circles. Then came the War, to be followed by the Bolshevik Revolution. After many adventures, she

and the Count managed to escape the Bolsheviks' clutches. With most of their fortune gone, they wandered rather aimlessly about Europe till the Count became seriously ill and died. Finally, romance again touched the Countess' life, and she married Manuelo Dionicio Fernandez-Azabal, "a member of one of the most esteemed families in Seville, a fine sportsman, a magnificent horseman and a noted amateur bullfighter."

This brief summary of the Countess' life may serve to indicate the kind of reminiscences to be found in her very entertaining autobiography, entitled "Romance and Revolutions" (with 20 illustrations, Hutchinson, 10s. 6d.). There are anecdotes about famous actors and actresses (the Byrons, Barrymores and Lily Langtry); stories and impressions of the German and Russian Courts and of Berlin and St. Petersburg society; glimpses into the personalities of such persons as the ex-Kaiser and the monk Rasputin; amazing tales of Grand-ducal intrigues during the war; and accounts of exciting experiences when the Revolution occurred. It is the brightly written life-story of one who has cultivated the art of living, who has suffered but gained much and who can end her reminiscences on the note: "I can honestly say that I am happy; that it has all been worth while."

A PHYSICIAN'S PHILOSOPHY

As a sort of modern counterpart to the "Religio Medici," Dr. W. Cecil Bosanquet gives us his "Meditatio Medici" (Gale & Polden, 7s. 6d.)—the philosophy of a broad-minded, tolerant and highly cultured physician. In his survey of mankind's material environment he passes in review ancient and modern conceptions of the universe and matter, professing an admiration in particular for the teachings of Heracleitus. He then deals with the development of man through the ages, offers his own conclusions on "the physical aspect of consciousness or mind" and the problem of the freedom of the will, and ends up with an insistence upon "the two great basic elements in the evolutionary process, variation and struggle." With Heracleitus he devoutly believes in the necessity of "conflict." "We may," he says, "congratulate ourselves on a remnant of sinfulness in our generation, in whom the love of combat is not quite extinct; for whom absolute social equality for all is not yet established; who have some prizes to struggle for and some difficulties to overcome."

WOLVES AND CANARIES

For a generation or more Mr. Ernest Thompson Seton has been writing of wild animals for the delectation of young and old. His latest book is called "Mainly About Wolves" (with illustrations by the author, Methuen, 8s. 6d.) and it contains stories culled from his own experience of the wild and also tales of historical wolves, such as Courtaud, king of the wolves, who terrorised Paris in the fifteenth century, the two huge Tyrone wolves who were slain in 1658, and the famous Rhone valley "man-eater" of the eighteenth century. The other animals that figure in the book include dogs, a squirrel and a Chillingham Bull,

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the last the cause of a most exciting experience for Mr. Seton.

Many bird lovers have kept or keep canaries in their houses or flats, but few people, one imagines, have given up so much of their time and thought to the study of these birds as has done Professor Gustav Eckstein of Ohio ("Canary: The History of a Family," Faber & Faber, 7s. 6d.). This Professor of Physiology has had at one time as many as thirty canaries flying about in and sharing the laboratory in which he works, and for twelve years he has been studying and recording canary characters and habits. He has seen an unwounded canary rendering first aid to, feeding and "hospitalizing" a wounded one; he has discovered that "an occasional bird will sleep one night on one foot, the next on another, but the nearly universal rule is that the same canary sleeps always on the same foot"; and he has noted several other interesting facts, notably about their loves and hates. Altogether an unusual book that should appeal to bird lovers—once they have accustomed themselves to the Professor's rather peculiar and inchoate style.

THE NORTH OF ENGLAND

A Batsford book is invariably a copiously and delightfully illustrated one and the latest in "The Face of Britain Series"—"North Country," by Edmund Vale (7s. 6d.)—has 127 photographic illustrations to 128 pages of text. Mr. Vale, in the course of his thirty-seven thousand word survey, manages with considerable skill to give his readers a clear picture of all the varying features of North Country scenery and life: moorland and arable plain, peak, lake and fell, the towns and their characteristics, the coal, iron and textile industries and a glimpse—rather a surprising one in some respects—into the depressed areas. Writing of the Durham mining village of Crook, 85 per cent. of the inhabitants of which are out of work, Mr. Vale says: "Of its kind (no colliery village is architecturally attractive) I have never set eyes on a smarter turned-out place. All the windows shone as if they were cleaned daily. The children and grown-ups seen about the streets were well dressed and looked fit. . . . The interiors of the houses which I went into were fresh and cheerful and newly done-up with wallpaper and paint, although some of the men had been living on the dole for five years." As a contrast in Hetton-le-Hole "there was no smart standard as at Crook and squalor was evident on all hands." "Why," asks Mr. Vale, "was Hetton-le-Hole in such a mess when it was presumably on the same financial ration?" There must be, he thinks, something in Crook's respectability standard and "as the Nonconformist element was evidently the leading force in the village, one must give it credit for a leadership and influence of no mean degree."

NEW NOVELS

A rather unusual picture of South African life is presented by "Unlucky Farm" by F. E. Mills Young (Hodder and Stoughton). It is the tragic tale of a young Englishman's infatuation for the wife of a Boer farmer and its fatal consequences

both for himself and the young bride he has taken out with him from England in the hope of settling down to a farming life. The author tells the story quietly but effectively and shows not only skill in characterisation, whether the subject be Kaffir, Boer or English, but also a gift for conveying an atmosphere that will be unfamiliar to many of his readers.

With a novel bearing the title "Bertie and the Lobster's Bride" (by J. W. Keightley, Stanley Paul) one is prepared for something in the nature of wild extravaganzas. It is, however, an entertaining book with parts in it that are exceedingly amusing.

Mrs. Maude Clayton Palmer, having written several popular stories for children, has now turned her hand to adult fiction and her first essay in this new line, "To Err is Human" (Heath Cranton), is a tale of considerable merit. It is the life-story of a young girl's development into womanhood, her marriage, her temporary attachment to a young man, her estrangement from and final reconciliation with her husband. The plot is perhaps a little incredible, but Mrs. Clayton Palmer tells her story with a charm that captures the reader's interest and holds it.

Messrs. Heinemann seem to specialise in clever writers of crime fiction. Two novels from this firm may be confidently recommended to the more discerning readers of this class of novel. The first is "Armed With a New Terror," by Theodora Dubois, a story of a series of apparently inexplicable murders in a single household. The mystery is well-sustained to the final chapter and the characters are all convincingly drawn. The second book is "Cry Aloud For Murder," by Paul McGuire and here, too, there is great subtlety in exhibiting character and developing the plot. The author has selected for the environment of his mysterious murder an avenue of houses on the outskirts of a seaside town and the inhabitants of this select locality are introduced to us with no little artistry in delineation. This gives the tale a specially attractive flavour and adds to the enjoyment of trying to solve the mystery.

PUBLISHERS' PLANS

Messrs. Methuen will be publishing early next month "Robinson of England" by the late Mr. John Drinkwater—a series of dialogues between an uncle, his nephew and nieces on English history, scenery, sport, industry and character.

Mr. Arthur Waley, the author of that delightful translation "The Tale of Genji," has now completed a book containing translations of over 300 Chinese songs dating from 800 to 600 B.C. This will be published by Messrs. Allen and Unwin in July.

Early publication jointly by Messrs. John Murray and Jonathan Cape is expected of a number of letters of Robert Browning and Julia Wedgwood in a book entitled "Robert Browning and Julia Wedgwood: A Broken Friendship as revealed by their Letters."

Round the Empire

STRIKING THE RIGHT NOTE

THE speeches at the preliminary plenary session of the Imperial Conference indicate that the Empire's statesmen, now gathered together for purposes of consultation, are approaching the important issues they have to discuss and decide both fully conscious of the responsibilities of themselves and the countries they represent to the Commonwealth and at the same time in no degree less alive to the necessity of strengthening that Commonwealth and making it a more effective instrument for promoting and securing the peace and progress of the world at large. "We are," said Mr. Baldwin, "partners in a great enterprise, jointly responsible for a new experiment, the success or failure of which must profoundly influence the future of mankind." And Mr. Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada, re-echoed the sentiment, while paying a graceful tribute to Mr. Baldwin for "re-interpreting democracy in relation to new needs." Mr. Lyons, the Australian Prime Minister, and General Hertzog, the Union Prime Minister, proceeded to amplify the previous speakers' declarations; the former insisting that the Dominions must "play their part in ensuring the peace of the world" and that the time had come for the "formulation of a consistent and unified Empire policy," the latter expressing the view that "they must try to co-ordinate their policies of action in such a way that they should be as mutually helpful as possible." "South Africa," General Hertzog significantly added, "was realising how closely she was implicated in the fate of Europe and in the fate of the world." Mr. Savage, Prime Minister of New Zealand, testified to that Dominion's warm attachment to the people of this country from which its inhabitants had sprung, its readiness to collaborate in any clarification of the partnership that might be considered necessary and its desire that the British Commonwealth "should endure, should be made fruitful, effective and even closer." Thus the voices of the "full partners" in unison and harmony, with the lesser members of the Conference offering their tribute to Commonwealth ideals. The veteran Indian Ruling Prince, His Highness the Maharajah Gaekwar of Baroda, whose memories go back to the Durbar of 1877 when the Empire of India was first proclaimed, ventured the opinion about India—which now occupies a position in the Conference midway between the Dominions and the new "observer" units, Burma and Southern Rhodesia—that the new political energies released would find their ultimate satisfaction in the attainment of full Dominion status in the British Commonwealth of Nations, and that if India had received and would receive much from the Commonwealth, she had equally much to give. On behalf of Southern Rhodesia Mr. Huggins, the Prime Minister, affirmed the colony's wholehearted

wish to do all in its power to co-operate with the rest of the Empire, while Burma's spokesman, Dr. Ba Maw, stressed his country's appreciation of the symbolic gesture made to it by its admission to the Conference.

The publicity accorded to all these speeches throughout the Empire is in itself a guarantee that these were not the mere empty "winged words" and formalities of a ceremonial occasion. They were the deliberate utterances of statesmen addressing the whole vast public of the Empire and more particularly that section of it which each of them represents. One may detect here and there, in the wording, the influence of special political environment: Ministers everywhere have naturally to keep an eye to the possible reactions of their own constituents. But the general effect of all these speeches is the same: firm faith in Commonwealth ideals and determination to safeguard them, a desire to extend the field of co-operation in every possible way so as to achieve a real unity of purpose, and finally and not least important a thorough realisation of the dangers of a much disturbed world and of the beneficial influence that a strong and resolute Empire can exert in favour of the cause of peace.

The Conference has begun on the right note and there is every reason to anticipate that it will continue as it has begun. Most of its work will be done in Committees, a plenary meeting only being called to record resolutions; and it is worthy of note that Foreign Affairs and Defence are to be dealt with by a body comprising the principal delegates, the Prime Ministers and such of their Ministerial colleagues as they may wish to have at their side. In all Conference matters it is an accepted principle, of course, that the ultimate sanction for any decision must rest with the Parliaments of the several parts of the Empire, but this does not and need not in actual practice prevent vigorous concerted action in any direction recommended by the Conference. In defence, for example, the main lines of co-operation were laid down in a resolution passed by the Conference of 1923 and re-affirmed three years later and the terms of this resolution have been loyally adhered to by all the "partners." It will be for the Conference of 1937 to survey the whole defence situation anew in the light of present international developments and to recommend for the acceptance of the various members such further measures of co-operation as may be felt to be necessary.

PACIFIC UNDERSTANDING

It would be foolhardy, at the time of writing, to venture any prediction about all the recommendations of the Conference. However, Australians cannot fail to see the significance in the opening speech of the leader of their delegation, Mr. J. A. Lyons, the Prime Minister. He left no doubt in the minds of his audience concerning the Australian Government's attitude to reduction of trade barriers when he declared: "There is a stronger tendency towards economic co-operation in the world to-day than for a number of years. The Empire must translate strong co-operation into policies contributing to world prosperity." It was a courageous

utterance for an Australian Prime Minister, especially one who will shortly lead his party into a general election. There is still a strong body of opinion in certain Australian quarters favouring high trade protection, and the interests represented by this section of thought may well prove dangerous antagonists at the time of an election.

However, Mr. Lyons no doubt feels that a majority of Australians will agree that a regional understanding in the Pacific is essential to the economic and national stability of the Empire countries situated in that ocean. It seems obvious that such an understanding cannot be achieved unless prospective foreign participants are offered a reasonable inducement in the form of better facilities for selling their goods in Empire markets. It will not be a simple matter to negotiate such pacts as the Australian Prime Minister envisaged. Nevertheless, his assurance that Australia is prepared to approach the problem in a spirit of sympathetic understanding should do much to encourage the goodwill of the foreign nations whose co-operation it is hoped to enlist.

COMMUNIST PARTY NOT WANTED

The discussions at the New Zealand Labour Party's annual conference should reassure the people of the Dominion on a point which must have bothered many of them. These discussions dispel the haunting fear that the Labour Movement might ally itself with Communism. Before the conference began, the National Executive had indicated the direction of the wind by declaring that members of the Labour Party might not also be members of the organisation known as the Friends of the Soviet Union. However, it remained for the delegates to endorse this decision. There was no uncertainty in the manner of their endorsement. They declared overwhelmingly that the Friends of the Soviet Union was a Communist body and thus ended, permanently, it is to be hoped, the unremitting efforts of the Communist Party in New Zealand to gain affiliation with the Labour Party.

The attitude of the conference to this question is, perhaps, as telling an illustration as could be desired of the sanity of the New Zealand Labour Party. Its controllers recognise that there is no place for Communism in a self-governing British community, where free speech, free thought and free action are not only permitted but encouraged. The theories of Karl Marx may appeal to a few fanatics in New Zealand, as they no doubt appeal to a few fanatics anywhere, but any effort to impose them on the people as a whole would be doomed. The British subject is in a very different class from the Russian peasant. He is allowed to know what is going on in the world, and current history has shown him that Communism leads only to the creation of dictatorships as savage and repressive as any flourishing in the world to-day. The New Zealand Labour Party has wisely realised that the cause it represents with such undoubted sincerity would be irreparably damaged by an alliance with Communism. Its exclusion of Red agitators should enhance its prestige throughout the world.

TABLE BAY HARBOUR'S GROWTH

Mr. Pirow, the Union Government's Minister of Defence, announced in February last the ambitious scheme for extending and improving the Table Bay Harbour. That scheme is to cost about £6,000,000 all told and will be completed in from eight to nine years. That is the estimate of the Railways and Harbours Board in a report recently submitted to the Union Parliament. The report also states that the first section of the scheme, estimated to cost about £2½ millions and providing for additional berths, the construction of a new mole and the reclamation of some 400 acres along the foreshore, should be finished within four years. That there is need for undertaking the improvements with the minimum of delay is emphasised by the Board which draws attention to the very considerable growth of traffic in the harbour during recent years. It points out that tonnage of cargo handled rose from 1,309,105 tons in 1933 to 2,050,125 tons in 1936; general cargo landed increased from 806,372 tons in 1931 to 1,099,912 tons in 1936; petrol and fuel-oil landed rose from 179,169 tons in 1933 to 498,874 tons in 1936; gross tonnage increased from 6,556,367 tons in 1932-33 to 11,318,639 tons in 1936-37, while the number of ships using the port increased from 1,545 to 3,157 during the same period.

The heavily increased traffic, the report says, is already causing much congestion, and apart from this there is the fact the ships now using Union ports are larger, longer and of deeper draught than formerly; consequently some of the existing berths are no longer able to accommodate four vessels together, as at one time was the case. Commenting on the report the *Cape Times* remarks that the lack of berthing accommodation has no doubt seriously restricted the development which might otherwise have taken place, and when it is known all over the world that Table Bay Harbour is being developed on such a scale, it is reasonable to expect that the rate of progress in the next ten years will be more rapid than in the past five. This is all the more probable in view of the development on the Rand Mines.

SOUTH AFRICA'S POOR WHITES

The Union Parliament, before its recess, had before it an important measure intended to deal with the problem of the Poor White. This measure, rather clumsily entitled the Unbeneficial Occupation of Lands Bill, seeks to expropriate private land that has been disastrously split up into uneconomic units through the working of the law of inheritance. The South African farmer for generations past has tended to divide up his land among his sons and as each son has followed the precedent thus set up the result has been the parcelling out of what may have been originally a fair estate into countless diminutive lots which can no longer provide a living for any of their owners. General Kemp, who was in charge of the Bill, gave some illuminating examples of this sub-dividing process. Three morgen of irrigable land divided among 72 descendants; 251 morgen, of which two

are irrigable, carrying hundreds of souls who already have thousands of heirs; many excellent farms which would give one family a living, being chopped up until instead of one good farm there were countless plots of no use to man or beast. The inevitable result was the creation of poor whites, living in rural slums where men, women and children, white and coloured, are huddled together in appalling conditions of social degradation. It was a grave disease which General Kemp claimed justified a drastic remedy. Under the Bill the farms which had been split up in this "unbeneficial" manner will become Crown property to be disposed of under the Land Settlement laws, the dispossessed farmers being given preferential treatment in the allocation. Those of the dispossessed who cannot be taken back will be given land somewhere else. The Government, General Kemp said, proposed to use its drastic powers sparingly, only applying the Bill to really bad cases, and excluding all land to which mineral or trading rights are attached or over which a local authority has jurisdiction. The Indians of Natal will not be affected.

SOUND SENSE FROM INDIA

We have repeatedly insisted on the fact that the efforts of well-meaning persons in this country to find a way out of the political impasse created by the Congress Party in India are not only doing no good, but are positively doing considerable harm. And we are glad to find that the responsible leaders of the large and influential British non-official

community in Calcutta have seen fit to publish a vigorous protest against similar manoeuvres by British sentimentalists in India. Their protest is worth quoting. They say (we quote a *Times* cable):—

"We are of opinion that no useful purpose can be served by attempting to bridge the gap between the Governors and a party avowedly pledged to destroy the Act, sever the British connection, and thereby achieve complete and isolated independence. We consider that those who advocate action by the Governor-General or Governors, whether by negotiations or other methods, with the object of attempting to find some formula which will enable the Congress Party to take the responsibility of office on terms acceptable to the leaders of that party, are doing us no good service. In view of the plainly stated objectives of the Congress Party, it appears to us nothing short of folly to advocate any course of action which bears even a semblance of willingness to restrict the exercise of the powers vested in the Governors by the Act."

The firm stand taken by Lord Zetland, the Secretary of State for India, on the subject of the Governors' powers is already having the effect that we have anticipated. Indian political opinion is gradually veering round to a severe criticism of Congress obduracy, and there is little doubt that if Simla and Whitehall continue to refuse to put themselves in the hands of Mr. Gandhi and the Pandit, there will be before long a split in the Congress ranks. The Mahatma's prestige is dependent upon the concessions he manages to wrest from placatory authority. Once it becomes obvious that, charm he so cunningly, he is not likely to gain a single point for the Congress wrecking programme, that section of Congress which is anxious to enjoy the sweets of office will find courage to voice their desires and see them fulfilled. But if this is to happen, there must be no more suggestions for "compromise" from people in this country who are believed in India to have the power of pulling political strings.

CANADIAN WOOD FOR CORONATION

Seldom, if ever, has a country seen so much wood "in action" as during the present Coronation season. It ranges from barricades and stands to the flagpoles and pylons, and may convey some practical idea of the vast resources from which these structures come. The bulk were derived from Canada. The forests of the Dominion, indeed, provide her with her third primary industry, ranking next to mining and agriculture. Last year the value of Canada's forest products was estimated at £60,000,000, roughly two-thirds of which was exported. This latter figure represented 21 per cent. of the Dominion's total exports.

The most important product of the industry is pulp and paper making, the growth of which has entailed enormous expenditure in the development of water power, in the upkeep of mills and in the building of new communities. The mills alone now provide employment for well over 28,000 people, with an annual pay-roll of over £7,200,000. The sawmills have an output worth £12,000,000, contributed to by nearly 3,600 saw mills.

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MACMILLAN

Letters to the Editor

INDIAN LOYALTY

Sir,—The policy of the Congress leaders—following in this as in other matters the lead of the Sinn Fein Party in Ireland since the treaty of 1921—to boycott the new Constitution and the Coronation celebrations may raise doubts in some minds as to the loyalty of the Indian peoples. But the Congress attitude, which is deplored and, in the case of the Coronation, disregarded by many of its followers, and which we may hope is only temporary and superficial, does not reflect the real mind of India. That is truly shown in the many recent manifestations of Indian loyalty to the Throne.

Among these are the splendid rally of so many Indian Princes, including some of the most powerful and distinguished, to the Coronation here—often at great personal inconvenience and in advance of the celebrations on their Majesties' future visit to India—to prove once more their unshaken loyalty. Another is the presence of 600 men in the Indian contingent, representing every race and every unit in the Indian Army—and the recently formed Indian Navy—from the Khyber to Cape Comorin. All who have had the opportunity of meeting these splendid veterans—some of them fresh from the Frontier expedition to which they are soon returning—have been impressed by their martial bearing and their gallant spirit. Their proved loyalty has just received a special and personal recognition from the King-Emperor in bestowing upon them with his own hand the Coronation medals. That is an honour which will be treasured and cherished by every unit of the Indian Army and the gallant races from which it is drawn throughout the length and breadth of the Indian Empire.

But there is another, and to many an even more striking, manifestation which outside the columns of *The Times* does not appear to have received the publicity it merits. That is the loyal message—published in *The Times* of May 14 with an admirable editorial comment—from "143,336 widows, wives and mothers of soldiers of the Indian Army" who desire individually to express their humble devotion and loyalty to the persons of their Majesties and the Royal Family and will ever pray that Almighty God will shower upon them the blessings of peace and happiness.

Their Majesties have sent a gracious response.

To those who know the retiring nature of the women of India behind the Purda nothing could be more touching and impressive than this spontaneous expression of their feelings, uniting all without distinctions of race, caste or religion on the common ground of devotion to the Throne. That feeling is innate in India and will reach its climax when their Majesties find the opportunity of coming into personal contact with her Princes and peoples.

M. F. O'DWYER.

APPEAL FOR OLD NURSES

[From the Duchess of Portland]

Sir,—At this time of rejoicing and when so much is done for the new generation, may I appeal to your readers to remember those who are old and have no happy anticipations, and who have served the community in a quiet unrecognised way for many years?

I refer to the many old trained nurses who worked for very small salaries in the past, and whose tiny savings were used to help relatives or dwindled away as they themselves became old and ill. Not many people realise that there are hundreds of them living in great poverty in lonely rooms, without enough food and warmth, and haunted by the prospect of entering the "institution."

Is this right after their lives of hard and devoted work? Surely we must try to help them to obtain the actual necessities of life—not luxury, not even comfort!

The Nurses' Fund for Nurses gives regular small grants which without speedy support must be reduced or stopped; it also supports a home for which an endowment fund is required.

Gifts, large or small, will be gratefully received and should be sent to the Duchess of Portland, c/o The Nurses' Fund for Nurses, 95, Dean-street, London, W.1.

WINIFRED PORTLAND.

SOLDIER SETTLERS

Sir,—Land settlement in the Dominions, and even elsewhere, might be made an important factor in the future of Imperial Defence, if men who had served with the Colours, were placed on the land in military units of organisation, so as to be ready for immediate action, while it would also do a great deal to raise the status of the soldier and be in the nature of deferred pay.

Individual colonisation now appears to have lost some of its powers of expansion, and while the best lands have not yet been exhausted, there is a great deal that would be all the better for tillage, with a proper head of stock on it, to maintain fertility, which would also require more labour and give employment.

While each man might be able to take up as much land as he could work, the bulk of the pasture lands might be retained for them to put out cattle, in proportion to the number which they were able to winter on their own holdings, which would thus require tillage in order to feed them. This would also supply a great Bond of Union for the Colonists.

The Pilgrim Fathers were really in the nature of a military colony, and so also were the French Canadians. Both have proved to be in fact indestructible, while they had besides a great Bond of Union in Religion. Other cases of the same sort might be cited nearer home. The Roman Colonies of Veterans gave a very good account of what they were able to do and must also have retained their old military organisation, as they kept their frontiers intact better than any walls and ramparts elsewhere. Every Legionary was also a full Roman

citizen, so that the duty to serve was balanced by a right to the franchise itself.

JOHN H. BURTON.

Newtown Park, Co. Dublin.

BRITISH SPAS

Sir,—I was pleased to see Sir N. Grattan-Doyle's letter in your last issue, because it is important that there should be no misconception in the mind of either the Press or the public as to what "Spa" means. We have some of the best Spas in the world in this country, and they are doing fine work—work which can only be done by a place which possesses not only natural medicinal waters, but the staff, the experience and the medical profession necessary to make the fullest use of them.

Like Sir Nicholas Grattan-Doyle I have nothing to say against those places, either seaside or inland, which can provide baths, massage, etc., for those who need it. But a Spa offers something quite different in character. When a person goes to a Spa he or she should be prepared to undergo a "cure," and a "cure" consists of giving oneself up to the restful atmosphere of the place, and consenting to be guided in diet, mode of life and treatment, by those who have had years of experience. There is ample testimony that in appropriate cases a Spa "cure" offers advantages which can be obtained at no other place and in no other way. I write this letter because as Secretary of this Association I have too much evidence of

the misconception which is referred to in the letter of Sir Nicholas Grattan-Doyle.

ALFRED COX,

General Secretary.

British Health Resorts Association, Limited,
199, Piccadilly, W.1.

"SHARE PUSHING"

Sir,—The laws relating to obtaining money by false pretences, larceny, fraud, etc., are quite sufficient to protect the public and there was not the slightest reason to create the new crime of share pushing. Why have the English a mania for extending the criminal law? If all these "Financial Reviews" and "Market Reports" which are sent through the post cause so much harm why is it not made an *ad hoc* offence to send them out? Again (if the report appearing in a recent issue of your paper is correct) Mr. Justice Finlay advises people to consult not only stock-brokers but bank managers as to stock and share transactions. Why should bank managers be encouraged to poach upon what should be the preserves of members of stock exchanges? Even the oldest of old ladies and the most rustic of country parsons can easily find reputable stock-brokers. Bankers (who being tradesmen are allowed to advertise) poach even more upon the preserves of solicitors. Bankers like cobblers should stick to (or be made to stick to) their last.

G. W. R. THORNTON.

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Your Investments

NEED FOR A LONG VIEW

THOSE very closely in touch with Stock Markets are almost at a disadvantage when the necessity for examining the investment position arises. When purely speculative profits are the main necessity, then the closest possible attention to detail and the greatest rapidity of action are required, but for investment purposes the long view should always prevail over the short outlook. Just at the moment, the latter is anything but favourable, but fundamentals remain without any great change, and once the temporary adverse influences are overcome the investor who has looked well into the future and has trusted his own judgment in the face of scares raised from day to day will reap the reward of his courage and, if he has not invested more than he can afford, he will have suffered no great stress and strain in the meantime.

Undoubtedly, the two main factors making for weak markets at the moment are fears as to the future of gold and the uncertainties of the National Defence Contribution proposals. Until the latter are given in more detail, it is too early to form any absolute conclusion as to their effect, though the basis of the proposals would appear at first sight to be wholly reprehensible as discouraging to enterprise, efficiency and economy and as likely to result in inflationary conduct of the nation's business and industry. The so-called "gold scare" is the more immediate factor and it need only be said here that the prospect of America taking such a deflationary step as to lower the price of gold seems highly improbable, though, in the line of monetary experiment, as the U.S.A. showed by its silver policy, nothing is impossible. Meanwhile the Bank of England has just increased its note cover by a further £5,000,000 of gold, and it cannot be imagined that this country, America or France is going to take any step which would make its gold reserves worth less than at present.

LET GOLD WORK

But, it is argued, there must be a limit to the amount of gold which the United States can purchase at its fixed price of \$35 per oz. only to store in the vaults of the Treasury. This is true, and the only solution would seem to be to let gold reserves do the work for which they are intended. If all supplies of the metal are made ineffective, as at present, then it is hardly fair to blame gold for the world's credit ills. A huge rise in prices in the United States would follow the credit expansion, but the effects of such expansion could be soundly offset by balancing the U.S. budgets and putting the country's finances in a healthy condition. Then

sterling-dollar stabilisation could become a thing of reality and a resumption of international lending would put international trade on its feet again. Only by finding serious work for Europe can the present drift towards war be averted. Finance and politics have never been so closely bound together; if only some of these bonds could be cut the political elements might be less harmful to the financial. Meanwhile, the long view gives us a glimpse of further inflationary influences, and it is on this supposition that the investor should take his stand.

FIXED INTEREST OR ORDINARY?

Thus it does not seem by any means time yet to advise the holder of ordinary shares to sell them in favour of fixed interest securities. Even if ordinary stocks and shares have difficulty in once again rising to the high levels touched earlier in the year, the fixed interest stocks, preference and debenture and Government stocks alike, would seem to be due for a decline to lower levels than those now ruling. It is pointed out that the yields of 4-4½ per cent. in such favourite industrials as Chemicals, Imperial Tobacco, Courtaulds and others is hardly sufficient an attraction to make their purchase worth while. But neither is the £3 8s. 6d. per cent. obtainable on the 3½ per cent. War Loan (only £3 6s. per cent. if redemption is allowed for) a very attractive income for the investor when income tax at 5s. in the £ has to be allowed for. The most likely looking investment for the Trustee who does not wish to be bothered by redemption considerations is 3 per cent. Local Loans stock, which at 88½ returns about £3 8s. per cent. India stocks do not appear by any means to stand at prices which discount unpleasant possibilities, however remote these may be. Of the Empire full trustee stocks the Australian 3½ and 3¼ per cent. loans appear the most attractive. Few will care for New Zealand stocks while that Dominion is in the throes of Socialistic experiment. Altogether fixed interest stocks, except for those which have a speculative flavour, appear wholly unattractive as against "equities" or ordinary shares, though many investors, of course, must rely upon Trustee investments.

HOME RAILS

Fears of a coal strike and of extensions of the London Transport strike have depressed prices of Home Railway stocks to levels at which they give a very good return. As none of the companies earns 6 per cent. on its capital, there is no question of their being affected by the National Defence Contribution proposals, and their income prospects are quite promising for some time to come in view of the continued revival in the heavy industries. Great Western ordinary stock at 61 returns almost 5 per cent., and L.M.S. ordinary at 31 yields 4 per cent. with good prospects of a higher return this

NORTH BRITISH & MERCANTILE

INSURANCE Co., Ltd.

Total Assets £53,202,250

Total Income exceeds £10,300,690

LONDON: 61, Threadneedle Street, E.C.2

EDINBURGH: 64, Princes Street

year and consequent capital appreciation on a low-priced purchase. L.M.S. 4 per cent. 1923 preference actually yields over £5 6s. per cent., and at the moment few look for anything but an increase of the margin by which the full dividend will be earned this year. As a better covered stock, the 4 per cent. first preference at 83, previously mentioned in these columns, gives the very good return of £4 17s. per cent.

GOLD MINES

Holders of gold-mining shares must be wondering in the midst of the present flurry whether they should sell or not. First let it be understood that it is extremely likely that prices will go still further down the scale before substantial and lasting recovery sets in, but, apart altogether from speculative influences, the shares of the sound producing mines paying good dividends look far more attractive to purchase than to sell. East Rand Prop. at 58s. 9d., West Rand at 30s. and Springs at the same price all look cheap if one believes in the opinion expressed earlier in these notes. But the "gold scare" has served to remind holders that their securities are in mining ventures and should offer returns commensurate with the risks taken. The growing idea that South African mines were a kind of public utility undertaking will take a deal of restoring.

CHEAP COPPERS

The forced liquidation of three weeks ago was largely centred in Diamond and Copper mining shares, and these fell to prices quite out of touch with the intrinsic merits of the shares. Thus Roan Antelope came down from 75s. to 62s. 6d., though the working profit for the March quarter was nearly double that for the final quarter of 1936. Roans have now recovered to 70s. and are expected to pay at least 60 per cent. for the year, and this would give a yield approaching 5 per cent. Rhodesian Anglo-American, mentioned in these columns at around 40s., were forced back to 28s. by panic sales and are now 33s. 6d.; the interim dividend was 6½ per cent., and there is thus every prospect of a yield of over 4½ per cent., apart from the capital appreciation attractions. Anglo-American Corporation themselves yield about 4½ per cent. at 3½, and the Anglo-American group have been particularly subjected to liquidation, so that one expects recovery to set in here more quickly than in shares of a less speculative nature.

A PROMISING INDUSTRIAL

The 5s. shares of George W. King, Ltd., lately introduced on the market at around 9s. 6d., now stand at just over 10s. and they appear to offer a good little industrial investment. The company has a capital of £100,000 in 5s. shares and manufactures conveyors for use in factories and workshops. Profits last year were equivalent to nearly 20 per cent. on the capital and with the present tendency for improvement and modernisation of factories the company's business would appear to have considerable scope for expansion as increased industrial profits are applied in this direction. Total net assets exclusive of any goodwill exceed the total capital, and they are believed to have been valued on a conservative basis. The business is carried on at Hitchin, Herts.

COMPANY MEETING

BRITISH MATCH CORPORATION

Steady Progress and Increasing Stability

THE Tenth Ordinary General Meeting of the British Match Corporation, Limited, was held on Tuesday at River Plate House, Finsbury Circus, London, E.C.

Mr. Clarence E. Bartholomew, O.B.E. (chairman and managing director), who presided, said:

We are pleased to be able to present a satisfactory account of our tenth year's work. The comparative figures on the accounts which are before you show no sensational changes, but they do show steady progress and increasing stability.

Value of Assets

In the accounts for 1928 the total value of all our assets appeared as £6,238,136. In the following year the Brazilian business was added with an addition of just over £700,000 to our capital, and the assets came to £7,055,443. To-day they are £7,809,000, although we have written off £360,000 from the goodwill item. It is our intention to write off that item altogether by allocations from profits each year.

Thanks mainly to special bonus dividends from Bryant and May, Limited—our principal operating company—we have amassed a reserve account of £700,000. This is all invested in fixed-dated British Government Securities, whose cost is just below their redemption price. We have, nevertheless, thought it prudent to recommend a reserve of £15,000 to cover any loss which we might have to make in the event of realising some of these securities for the purpose of acquiring further trade investments when opportunities arise. The holdings in subsidiary and associated companies have yielded a very satisfactory return.

Improved Conditions in Brazil

As you will remember, the Brazilian investment has been a cause of some anxiety to your directors, but there has been a substantial improvement in the conditions of that country, and, if these improved conditions continue, that anxiety will be removed. The fall in the exchange, which no one could have foreseen, means that even though profits in milreis may be reasonably good, they yield a smaller return on our investment when converted into sterling than we had reason to expect.

We have been glad to increase our interests in the Argentine, where exchange conditions have improved, for we have confidence not only in that wonderful country, but also in the management of our associates there.

Home Trade

In the home trade we have held our own, in spite of a continuance of the abnormal competition from Soviet Russia to which I referred last year. This has been carried on with no regard to profit, but the business has not grown in volume, owing to competition from other imported matches. Our Dominion investments have all been remunerative once more.

The revenue account shows the second highest net revenue which we have yet achieved, and there is an increase in all the items on the right side of that account, except in transfer and registration fees. This figure shows that the shares are well held, for we have passed only just under 2,000 transfers in the year, although there are more than 10,000 shareholders. This stable shareholding seems to us to justify our policy of endeavouring to fortify reserves and to eliminate unsubstantial assets from our balance sheet, with a view to a gradual increase in the real value of your investment, regardless of market fluctuations.

I beg to move: "That the directors' report and accounts for the year ended April 30, 1937, be received and adopted; that £15,000 be placed to reserve against depreciation in value of Government securities; that £60,000 be written off goodwill, rights, etc.; that a dividend at the rate of 5½ per cent. per annum, less income tax at 4s. 3.9d. in the pound be paid on the Preference shares for the half-year to April 30, 1937; that a dividend of 5 per cent., less income tax at 4s. 5.72d. in the pound be paid on the Ordinary shares of the corporation."

The Rt. Hon. John W. Hills, M.P. (deputy-chairman), seconded the resolution and it was carried unanimously.

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For information as to enrolling as a member of the League, please communicate with the General Secretary, The Navy League, Grand Buildings, Trafalgar-square, London, W.C.2.

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